DATELINE NO. 62 MIAMI
RUSSELL SPLANE

MARCH 3, 1976

BLACK GROVE, INC.
(VOICED PIECE, INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: AND NOW THE VOICE OF AMERICA PRESENTS DATELINE ... ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF PROGRAMS ABOUT PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, FROM VOA CORRESPONDENT RUSSELL SPLANE, THE STORY OF HOW A GROUP OF BLACK RESIDENTS IN A SOUTHERN CITY HAVE FORMED AN ORGANIZATION TO CREATE A BETTER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES. IT'S CALLED BLACK GROVE, INCORPORATED.

NARR: JUST A FEW KILOMETERS FROM DOWNTOWN MIAMI, ALONG THE SHORE OF BISCAYNE BAY, LIES A DELIGHTFUL NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED COCONUT GROVE, AN AREA THAT'S FAMOUS AS AN ARTISTS' COLONY, A THEATRICAL CENTER AND A PLACE FOR PLEASANT LIVING. BUT WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THIS LARGELY WHITE-POPULATED DISTRICT, A SECOND COCONUT GROVE HAS DEVELOPED -- A GHETTO-LIKE NEIGHBORHOOD INHABITED MOSTLY BY BLACKS. BUT SOME RESIDENTS OF THIS BLACK GROVE, AS IT'S CALLED -- HAVE STARTED A DRIVE TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS AND BRING THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIFE UP TO THE STANDARDS ENJOYED IN THE WHITE PART OF THE GROVE. THE MOVEMENT IS LED BY AN ORGANIZATION CALLED BLACK GROVE, INCORPORATED. WALTER GREEN IS THE PRESIDENT OF BLACK GROVE, INC. HE EXPLAINS HOW THE ORGANIZATION WORKS. ONE QUESTION: DOES IT LIMIT ITS PROGRAM TO THE BLACK SECTION OF THE GROVE?

TAPE: CUT ONE -- GREEN

"DEFINITELY NOT. WE HOPE TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE GROVE AREA. BLACK GROVE IS JUST A NAME. WE HOPE TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE AREA, BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER SO THAT WE CAN WORK THIS THING OUT TOGETHER AND MAKE A COMMUNITY AS I KNEW IT FROM (WHEN I WAS) A BOY. I HAVE LIVED HERE ALL OF MY LIFE, ABOUT FIFTY-ONE YEARS NOW, I WAS BORN AND REARED RIGHT IN THE GROVE AREA."

NARR: THE BLACK GROVE IS A MELTING POT OF BLACKS -- BAHAMAIANS, JAMAICANS, HAITIANS -- A TOTAL OF FIFTEEN NATIONALITIES. WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THESE PEOPLE? ARE THEY ANY DIFFERENT IN THE PRIDE THEY SHOW IN THEIR COMMUNITY -- IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY OWN THEIR HOMES -- AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY ARE RUNNING BUSINESSES? WHAT KIND OF A COMMUNITY IS BLACK GROVE?

TAPE: CUT TWO -- GREEN

"WELL FROM A PERSON WHO WAS BORN AND REARED IN THE AREA, IT IS A BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY TO ME, I WILL SAY THAT. BECAUSE THERE IS A LOT OF PRIDE IN THE COMMUNITY. WE ARE PROUD TO SAY THAT WE HAVE SIXTY-FIVE TO SEVENTY PER CENT HOME OWNERSHIP."

NARR: BUT EVEN THOUGH IT IS A PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT BY ITS PEOPLE'S STANDARDS. THEY STILL WANT TO IMPROVE IT. HOW WILL THEY GO ABOUT DOING THAT?

TAPE: CUT THREE -- GREEN

"THE PLAN IS TO GET THE POWERS-THAT-BE TO LOOK INTO THIS WORKABLE ONE-MILE (2.6-SQUARE KILOMETERS) SQUARE AREA, UPGRADING THE BLACK COMMUNITY -- BY PAINTING UP, FIXING UP AND MAYBE ENCOURAGING BLACK OWNED BUSINESSES DOWN IN THAT PART OF THE AREA. I THINK IF WE CAN GET THIS OVER TO THE PEOPLE THAT ARE IN CHARGE, THE PEOPLE THAT CAN HELP US MOST, I THINK WE CAN ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING IN THIS AREA."

NARR: THIS IMPROVEMENT EFFORT HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A "BICENTENNIAL PROJECT". WHAT DOES BLACK GROVE HOPE TO DO DURING THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL YEAR?

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- GREEN

"WELL, DURING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR WE HOPE TO GET ENOUGH PUBLICITY AND ENOUGH PEOPLE INTERESTED SO THAT THEY-WILL GET BEHIND US AND TRY TO MAKE THIS AN ON GOING PROJECT. WE WANT TO BREAK GROUND IN THIS PARTICULAR YEAR. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS NO WAY THAT WE CAN COMPLETE WHAT WE WANT TO DO OR WOULD LIKE TO DO TO THIS AREA BY THE END OF 1976 -- NO WAY."

NARR: THE AIM-IS NOT NECESSARILY TO TRY TO INTEGRATE THE WHOLE COCONUT GROVE AREA. BLACK GROVE INCORPORATED IS NOT TRYING TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE BLACK FAMILIES MOVE INTO OTHER PARTS OF THE GROVE WHICH ARE PREDOMINANTLY WHITE NOW. IS THE ORGANIZATION WILLING TO LET BOUNDARIES EXIST SO LONG AS THERE ARE NO ARTIFICIAL BARRIERS?

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- GREEN

"THAT IS RIGHT. I REMEMBER -- IF I MAY GO BACK -- YEARS AGO WE WOULD WALK TO THE BAY FRONT FROM WHERE I LIVED WHICH IS FLORIDA AVENUE ALMOST IN THE HEART-OF THE BLACK AREA. WE WALKED, WE FISHED, WE HAD FRUIT. I WOULD LIKE-TO SEE-IT OPEN ONE DAY AGAIN LIKE IT WAS THEN. IT IS NOT A MATTER OF INTEGRATION. INTEGRATION IS NOT THE QUESTION AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED NOW BECAUSE THERE ARE BLACKS AND WHITES LIVING IN THE BLACK GROVE AREA. MAKE BLACK GROVE AS ATTRACTIVE AS WHITE GROVE. THIS IS WHAT WE WANT TO DO."

NARR: WALTER GREEN, THE PRESIDENT OF BLACK GROVE, INC., IN THE COCONUT GROVE SECTION OF MIAMI, FLORIDA.

ANNCR: YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO DATELINE, REPORTS ON PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS AROUND THE UNITED STATES. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT _____ (AT THIS TIME) FOR ANOTHER DATELINE, FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE IN AMERICA. THIS IS _____.

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